



Passaic Valley Water Commission

Preliminary Organizational Evaluation

Executive Director Report Jim Mueller

Board Meeting
February 23, 2022

Introductory Bio



Jim Mueller

Executive Director

Passaic Valley Water Commission

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Jim Mueller has 29 years of experience in planning, designing, constructing and supporting operations of large-scale water and wastewater infrastructure improvement projects. He has been extensively involved in developing and implementing \$13B of transformational infrastructure programs. In addition, Mr. Mueller has led organizational and business process changes in several large organizations as well as the creation and advancement of a comprehensive risk assessment, prioritization and asset management program.

A graduate of Manhattan College and New York University, Mr. Mueller holds a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering, a Master's Degree in Environmental Engineering and an MBA in Finance and Statistics.

Preliminary Organizational Introductions

- Meetings with Department Heads/Key Staff starting in early January 2022
 - Suzanne DeLorenzo – Laboratory
 - Jeff Baig – Distribution
 - Wendy Simone – Purification
 - Bob Lorfink - Pumping
 - Pat Porcaro - Engineering
 - Mike Marotta – Maintenance
 - Yitz Weiss - Accounting
 - Maria Malfa – Customer Service
 - Gregg Lucianin – Purchasing

Lou Amodio has been crucial in facilitating the organizational transition!

Preliminary Organizational Feedback

- Almost every department flagged personnel issues as the primary concern
 - Lack of qualified staff/limited depth impacting:
 - Operational response and training
 - Engineering workload production
 - Supervisory span of control
 - Succession Planning
 - Lack of input on hiring
 - Unqualified hires cause morale issues with competent staff
 - Lack of formal performance evaluations
 - Accountability inhibited with no formal process to recognize good work and improve poor performance
 - Organizational structure has morphed over time
 - Some functions bundled together without clear link
 - Some functions developed ad-hoc among other competing needs
 - Unqualified staff put in roles that aren't good fit
 - Lack of leadership and direction on staffing

Recent Organizational Assessment

- The Commission hired an outside company, **Westin Technology Solutions** with the following goal:

To objectively evaluate the Commission's Personnel Department's ("Department") organization, existing services, and related business practices. This includes a review of the Department's current roles and responsibilities, levels of service, and operational functions against best industry practices and alignment with the Commission's business goals.

- Westin produced a report dated **October 6, 2021** with 19 recommendations that all follow basic industry standards in terms of human resources and organizational development. The top two recommendations are below:

1. HR Vision: Determine the new vision for the Personnel Department with enhanced levels of communications and employee service, including a more 'human' and 'fair' approach.

2. HR Director: Establish a new HR Director position and recruit and fill the position. The HR Director will be responsible for establishing new strategies and actions to accomplish the desired HR program vision. Modify the current Personnel Director position. Clarify and communicate the new HR Department roles and responsibilities throughout the Commission.

The recommendations in Westin's report are consistent with preliminary staff feedback over the last 5 weeks.

Next Steps

- Based on staff feedback and the recent organizational assessment performed by the Commission, reengineering the Personnel Department into a modern organizational development and human resources department is my first priority
 - Setting a new direction will greatly assist PVWC in recruiting and retaining qualified staff in both skilled trades and professional titles
 - The short and long-term success of PVWC is directly correlated to the quality of staff operating the system
 - With impending retirements the opportunity is now to create a new vision
 - Casting a wide net will ensure getting a qualified and experienced person
 - Encourage internal staff to apply and give due consideration
 - Use a search firm to work directly with me to identify external candidates
- I am evaluating additional organizational priorities which I hope to discuss at next months personnel committee meeting including:
 - Asset Management and Data Analytics
 - Information Technology
 - Security
 - Health and Safety
 - Public Affairs
 - Customer Service